



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1332.0.55.001 - CensusAtSchool Newsletter, Jul 2008

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 14/07/2008

## Summary

### CensusAtSchool Newsletter - July edition

#### July CensusAtSchool Newsletter - Edition No. 27

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#### Let the Data Begin!

The 2008 CensusAtSchool questionnaire closed on the 4 July 2008, making way for the next phase of the project. Over 44,000 students from a cross range of more than 3,480 government, catholic and independent schools submitted a questionnaire this year.

The 2008 questionnaire offered fresh and exciting analysis possibilities to engage students in inquiry-based learning. New variables in your sample will include money earned/received in the last week, source of money, hours of sleep, expanded student opinion questions, and additional or modified categories applied to previous questions (e.g. more Breakfast options, Takeaway options, technology etc).



The Data Usage phase allows your students to use the random sampler to extract REAL, 'dirty' data about student lifestyles, attitudes to social and environmental issues, health and nutrition habits, use of technology, water saving actions, and much more. A key advantage of dirty (or 'unedited') data is the potent possibilities for discussion of statistical concepts, such as outliers in datasets and how to treat them. Overall, students now have the chance to observe data in its 'original state' (data that they can take ownership of), and turn it into meaningful information useful for decision making. Hence the student is both respondent and statistician!

We hope you enjoy the next phase of the project, and would love to hear how the data is being used in YOUR classroom.

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#### How Do I...? 2008 Random Sampler Q&A's

## **Q: How do I generate a random sample?**

A: The random sampler can be accessed from the Student Area main page. To generate a random sample, students can select: the reference year (2006 or 2008 database), questions to display (All, questions, common questions from 2006 and 2008 or international questions only), sample size, and the usual sample characteristics such as gender, postcode range and year level.

## **Q: What should I do if I get a "no sample" error message when trying to generate a sample?**

A: The "no sample" error message will be given if there is a slight possibility a student will be identified from their responses. This occurs due to a 10% rule that has been added to the sampler, in line with the strict confidentiality principles upheld by the ABS. Try again by broadening your variables criteria (i.e. combine year levels/broaden postcode range/ select 'All' for gender) or selecting a smaller sample. For more information about the 10% rule, please visit How to Use CensusAtSchool Data.

## **Q: How do I analyse international questions?**

A: To compare Australian student responses with other participating countries, you can generate a separate random sample for each country and place them on two different worksheets in one Excel file. Please note that only the questions marked by the international

 are directly comparable between countries. These questions were established in March by delegates of the 2007 CensusAtSchool International Workshop. Find comprehensive instructions for generating an international sample, in the How The International Data Can be Used page.

## **Q: How do I compare common questions between 2006 and 2008?**

A: Students now have the option of selecting to display **only** the common questions in the random sampler. This will mean their sample will contain only those questions deemed comparable between the 2006 and 2008 questionnaires. Please download the **Common Questions Cheat Sheet** prior to conducting investigations, to be aware of some slight variations in questionnaire wording/categories that may affect your results. This sheet is available from the Project Reference Documents page, and also every time you download a sample of the common questions, e.g:

Download data sample file: [cas\\_sample\\_83109568.xls](#)

Download data variables sheet: [common\\_ques\\_variable\\_sheet.xls](#) 

Download common questions cheat sheet: [common\\_questions\\_cheat\\_sheet.xls](#) 

If you have an enquiry about the Random Sampler, please send an email to [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au).

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## **Where to access the data**



The CensusAtSchool data page is one that we're sure you will visit frequently! Although the Random Sampler is the main tool for accessing the raw data, there are still other ways you can use the data in the classroom. Our panel of teacher consultants have created a range of ready-to-use classroom activities linked to the SOSE and Maths



curricula. Please note new activities based on 2008 data will be uploaded soon. If the internet is problematic at your school, you can use our range of class prepared samples and information tables sourced from the CensusAtSchool database. These are downloadable in Excel and Word formats, ready to go. As the project is designed for a broad range of users (upper primary to senior secondary students), analysis can range from exploring favourite breakfast meals to hypothesis testing and confidence intervals. What would YOUR students want to know about their peers?

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## CensusAtSchool PD tutorials coming soon to website

The CensusAtSchool Professional Development DVD will soon be available to view from the CensusAtSchool website. Users can watch individual tutorials, each streamlined from YouTube. The tutorials will range from a broad introduction to the project, to specific statistical tools in Excel that can be integrated into your student's analysis. Whether you're an Excel novice wanting to learn more about Excel functions, or just interested in getting some ideas for classroom activities - the tutorials will cater for your needs!

PD chapters will be accessible from the Professional Development pages of the Teacher Area.

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## Conference Calendar

The following dates are scheduled conference attendances for July - September 2008. An ABS representative will either be attending a trade display or running a presentation. Stop by and have a chat! If you would like to know more about these events, please forward your enquiry to [education@abs.gov.au](mailto:education@abs.gov.au).

Date	Conference
2-4 August	International Middle Years of Schooling
10-11 August	GTAV
22-23 August	Canberra Maths
19-21 September	MTANSW
29 September	ACEConference

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## Idea for the Classroom: Who has broadband?

Our Teacher Consultant, Ian Wong, has recently developed a class activity exploring internet access type over time. A question is posed: Is it true that most students did not have broadband in 2006? Students conduct a comparative analysis utilising the 2006 and 2008 CensusAtSchool databases, and asked to draw some conclusions. An extension of the activity is also available for senior year levels, drawing on some key ABS publications such as the Census of Population and Housing. An accompanying student worksheet is also provided in PDF and Word formats, that can be tailored to your class's needs. The activity was created in line with National Mathematics Day 2008 and is available from the AAMT website.



Stay tuned for more classroom activity ideas in forthcoming issues of the CensusAtSchool Newsletter.

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## A Word From The CensusAtSchool Team



The CensusAtSchool Team would like to extend a big note of appreciation to all the schools that have taken this unique student-centred project on board in 2008. You have once again created a wonderful educational resource for Australian students. In the case of the random sampler, it is certain: without quantity there can be no quality!

This is a good time to get inspired about the manifold possibilities the data offers. Browse through past editions of the CensusAtSchool Newsletters to view ideas for the classroom, or head straight to Activities & Student Work and Case Studies pages for real examples of assignment sheets, marking rubric and student's work from the 2006 project.

What have YOUR students done with the data? If you have some student work that you would like to share with the rest of the CensusAtSchool community, please forward it to [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au) today.

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If you have any questions or general CensusAtSchool project enquiries, please contact ABS Education Services, CensusAtSchool Team by email [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au) or on free call 1800 623 273 between 9:00am and 5:00pm (AEST) Monday to Friday.

## About this Release

The CensusAtSchool newsletter is a service for users of the CensusAtSchool online learning project. It provides useful support information, project updates and community feedback on how the project is being used by teachers and students in schools across Australia. Each issue contains a feature article, a teacher support article and a general interest article, along with project updates, teacher tips and tricks and other related material. For more information on the CensusAtSchool project, visit <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/cashome.nsf/Home/Home>

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